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Religious

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Abraham Lincoln and Religion

Quaker

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

LINCOLN'S ♦ RELIGIOUS ♦ BELIEFS

IN view of the much discussed question of the religious beliefs of Lincoln, this letter, recently published, is of special interest and importance.

It was written to a prominent Quaker and was quoted for the first time by Major General Grenville M. Dodge in his "Personal Recollections," issued for private circulation. The letter follows:

Executive Mansion,
Washington, Sept. 4, 1864.

Eliza P. Gurney:

My Esteemed Friend—I have not forgotten—probably never shall forget—the very impressive occasion when yourself and friends visited me on a Sabbath afternoon two years ago. Nor has your kind letter, written nearly a year later, ever been forgotten. In all, it has been your purpose to strengthen my reliance on God. I am much indebted to the good Christian people of the country for their constant prayers and consolations and to no one of them more than to yourself. The purposes of the Almighty are perfect and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perceive them in advance. We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this, but God knows best and has ruled otherwise. We shall acknowledge his wisdom and our own error therein. Meanwhile we must work earnestly in the best light he gives us, trusting that so working still conduces to the great ends he ordains. Surely he intends some great good to follow this mighty convulsion, which no mortal could make and no mortal could stay.

Your people—the Friends—have had and we are having a very great trial. On principle and faith, opposed to both war and oppression, they can only practically oppose oppression by war. In this hard dilemma some have chosen one horn and some the other. For those appealing to me on conscientious grounds I have done and shall do the best I could and can, in my own conscience, under my oath to the Lord. That you believe this I doubt not, and believing it I shall still receive for our country and myself your earnest prayers to our Father in heaven. Your sincere friend,

A. LINCOLN.

Lincoln and the Quakeress.

During the war Mrs. Gurney, an eminent Quakeress, sought an interview with Mr. Lincoln, in order to animate his spirit by exhortation and prayer. One rainy Sunday morning she, in company with three Friends, saw the president in his private room at the White House.

In a short address she assured him of the sympathy which she and the Friends felt for the burden bearing executive. She then knelt in fervent prayer for him and the country.

As Mrs. Gurney was leaving, the president took her hand, and holding it for a few moments in silence, said: "I am glad of this interview. In the very responsible situation in which I am placed, as an humble instrument in the hands of my Heavenly Father, I have desired that all my words and actions be in accordance with His will; but if, after endeavoring to do my best with the light which He affords me, I find my efforts fail, then I must believe that for some purpose unknown to me He wills it otherwise.

"If I had had my way, this war would never have been; but nevertheless it came. If I had had my way, the war would have ended before this; but nevertheless it still continues.

"We must conclude that He permits it for some wise purpose, though we may not be able to comprehend it. For we cannot but believe that He who made the world still governs it."—March 29, 1883.

AN AUTHENTIC LINCOLN STORY
FRIENDS' WITNESS 3RD MONTH 1931.

There is a story in regard to Lincoln that ought not to be lost to our people and nation. This story certainly has never been published in full. It is likely that the present writer is the only person to whom it was communicated directly; at least, who remembers it sufficiently well to relate it clearly.

In council with Stanton, Secretary of War, Lincoln said, "Burnside must be removed, but I cannot find a man to take his place. He is doing no good. It seems like everything is against us. I do not know what to do, and cannot see one ray of hope. "Stanton could offer no relief, and he left the council room. Lincoln walked with him to the door, and observing two women sitting in the waiting room, asked who they were. "They are two Quaker ladies who want to see you," was the reply. "Let them come first," Lincoln said, although there were others who had arrived earlier, officials on important business.

Rachel Grellet and Elizabeth L. Comstock were ushered into his presence. He received them kindly and sat down between them. He had met them before; indeed had given them letters to all army officers, directing that they be allowed to go wherever they should elect under protection of the army. They had visited various camps and hospitals where, as angels of mercy, they had cheered many a soldier in distress as two saintly mothers ministering to their physical, as well as their spiritual needs.

I will relate the story of this visit, as told to me personally by Elizabeth L. Comstock, giving it in her own words as nearly as I can remember:

"We were seated in the council room with Lincoln alone. We told him that we had been impressed that we ought to come to him with a message of love and cheer and encouragement. In appearance he was downcast and looked as if ready to give up. He said, "well, if you have any encouragement for me, please give it. I need it. Be free to say whatever is on your minds to say." I said 'Abram, we believe we have a message from the LORD for thee, HE has laid a great burden upon thee, and thou canst not bear it alone. It is too much for thee. HE says, 'be of good courage and I will be with thee. I will not leave thee nor forsake thee.' Thou shalt prevail, only be of good courage. Cast all thy burdens upon HIM. HE is the great burden-bearer. Nothing is too hard for HIM. The destiny of this great nation is upon HIM. Do not try to carry it thyself. Look to HIM, HE will guide thee. HE will give thee wisdom, and thou shalt prevail. May it not be that GOD has raised thee up, like Moses to be the great emancipator of HIS people to establish the nation united and free? As HE said to Joshua, 'only be strong and of a good courage.'

"When we had finished our message, as we believed the LORD had given it to us, we arose to go, and said, 'we had better not take any more of thy time.' He said, 'aren't you going to pray with me?' With one voice we said, 'we hoped thee would ask for that.' we both knelt and he between us. We clasped our hands each in front. He reached his broad hand and clasped mine in his right and that of Rachel in his left, and his hands trembled like a leaf in the breeze. It was a very solemn occasion, and we felt as if we were helping him to roll the burden off his shoulders, and that JESUS was there ready to receive them. When we had ceased speaking, he said 'Amen' good and strong.

"When we arose, his countenance was so changed he looked as though he had the victory."

(Told by George N. Hartley in the "AMERICAN FRIEND")

(Copied by J. Marshall Watkins, Sr., Pasadena 6 Calif.)

February 1, 1951.

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor.
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

No. 357

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

February 10, 1936

MY ANCESTORS—A. LINCOLN

My grandfather's christian name was Abraham. He had four brothers: Isaac, Jacob, John, and Thomas. They were born in Pennsylvania and came from Berks (County). The lineage has been traced no farther back than this. An effort to identify them with the New England family of the same name ended in nothing more definite than a similarity of christian names in both families, such as Enoch, Levi, Mordecai, Solomon, Abraham, and the like. The family were originally Quakers though in later times they have fallen from the peculiar habits of that people.¹

Grandfather and some if not all the others in early life removed to Rockingham County, Virginia. So far as known the descendants of Jacob and John are still in Virginia. Isaac went to a place where Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee join and his descendants are still in that region. Thomas came to Kentucky to Fayette County, I think, where as I understand, after many years he died, whence his descendants went to Missouri.

I remember a long time ago seeing Austin and Davis Lincoln said to be sons of Hannaniel or Hannaneal Lincoln who was said to have been cousin of my grandfather.

My paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham County, Virginia, to Kentucky, about 1781 or 2, where a year or two later, he was killed by Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest.² The story of his death and of Uncle Mordecai, then fourteen years old, killing one of the Indians is the legend more strongly than all others imprinted upon my mind and memory. Grandfather left a widow, three sons and two daughters. His family resided in Washington County, Kentucky.

The eldest son, Mordecai, remained in Kentucky till late in life when he removed to Hancock County, Illinois, where soon after he died and where several of his descendants still remain. My Uncle Mordecai had three sons: Abraham, James, and Mordecai. His two sons there now (1848) are Abraham and Mordecai and their post office is La Harpe.

The second son, Josiah, farther back than my recollection went from Kentucky to a place on Blue River, now within Hancock County, Indiana. I have not heard from him in a great many years and whether he is now living I cannot say. My recollection of what I have heard is that he has several daughters and only one son, Thomas. Their post office is Corydon, Harrison County, Kentucky. I often saw Uncle Mordecai, and Uncle Josiah but once in my life, but I never resided near either of them.

The eldest sister, Mary, married Ralph Crume in Washington County, Kentucky, and some of her descendants are known to be in Breckinridge County, Kentucky. The second sister, Nancy, married William Brumfield and her family are not known to have left Kentucky.

Thomas, my father, the youngest son, was born in Rockingham County, Virginia. By the very early death of his father and the very narrow circumstances of his mother, even in childhood he was a wandering laboring

boy, and grew up literally without an education. He never did more than to bunglingly write his own name. Before he was grown he passed one year as a hired hand with his Uncle Isaac on Watauga, a branch of the Holston River. I have often heard my father speak of his Uncle Isaac residing at Watauga. Getting back into Kentucky and having reached his twenty-eighth year he married Nancy Hanks in the year 1806. She was also born in Virginia; and relatives of hers by the name of Hanks and of other names now reside in Coles, in Macon, and in Adams County, Illinois, also in Adams County, Iowa. John Hanks who now engineers the "rail enterprise" at Decatur is a first cousin of my mother. My parents were of undistinguished or second families perhaps I should say.

Father removed to what is now Spencer County, Indiana, in the Autumn of 1816. The removal was partly on account of slavery but chiefly on account of difficulty with land titles in Kentucky. In the Autumn of 1818, on October 5, my mother died.

A year afterwards my father married Mrs. Sally Johnston at Elizabethtown, Kentucky, a widow with three children of her first marriage. She proved a good and kind mother to me. There were no children of this second marriage. My father's residence continued in the same place in Indiana until 1830.

March 1, 1830, my father and family, with the families of the two daughters and sons-in-law of my stepmother, left the old homestead in Indiana and came to Illinois. Our mode of conveyance was wagons drawn by ox-teams and I drove one of the teams. We reached the County of Macon, and stopped there some time within the month of March. My father and family settled a new place on the north side of the Sangamon River, at the junction of the timberland and the prairie, about ten miles westerly from Decatur.

The sons-in-law were temporarily settled in other places in the county. In the autumn all hands were greatly afflicted with ague and fever to which they had not been used and by which they were greatly discouraged, so much so that they determined on leaving the county. They remained, however, through the succeeding winter of the very celebrated "deep snow" of Illinois.

My father with his own family and others mentioned, had, in pursuance to their intention, removed from Macon to Coles County. He is still living in Coles County, Illinois, being in the seventy-first year of his age (1848). His post office is Charleston, Coles County, Illinois.³

1. The Berks County Lincolns now are known to have been descendants of the New England Lincolns.

2. Duly authorized records now establish grandfather Lincoln's death in 1786.

3. Thomas Lincoln died January, 1851.

Editor's Note—This number of Lincoln Lore contains the first of a series of autobiographical sketches compiled from the writings of Abraham Lincoln which will appear from time to time in this bulletin. Every word used is just as Lincoln wrote it with the exception of substituting the first person for the third person as used by Lincoln in the sketches he prepared for John L. Scripps in 1859. L. A. W.

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 606

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

November 18, 1940

LINCOLN'S RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

The Thanksgiving season creates an environment which invites one to think of the marvelous faith and courage of our fathers who gave to America a Christian heritage. The season also recalls family altars which have influenced so many of our outstanding statesmen. There can be no doubt but what Abraham Lincoln's reliance upon the unseen power was due to the generations of Lincolns before him who had been devout worshippers of God.

The presence of the Lincoln family in America, like so many of the Pilgrim forebears, was due to religious persecution in the mother country. Samuel Lincoln, who came to Massachusetts in 1637, helped to build the oldest house of worship in continual use now standing in the nation; it is the Old Ship Church at Hingham, Massachusetts.

After migrating from Hingham, Massachusetts, Abraham Lincoln's forebears settled in New Jersey, where they intermarried with the family of Obadiah Holmes who was in turn persecuted by the early settlers for his liberal religious views.

The next step in the Lincoln migration brought them to Pennsylvania, and here they were joined in marriage with the Quakers. Mordecai Lincoln, great grandfather of President Lincoln, was born among the Pilgrims of Massachusetts, married into a "dissenter" family in New Jersey, and was finally buried in a Quaker burial ground in Pennsylvania.

When the Lincolns reached the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia they were caught up by the evangelical appeal of the Baptists, and the Linville Creek Baptist Church was built adjacent to if not on the very land of the Lincolns. With this church Abraham Lincoln, the grandfather of the President, united.

Many of the Virginia migrations to Kentucky were church migrations. Sometimes a whole congregation would move in a body. The pioneer Abraham Lincoln established his home on a four hundred acre tract near Louisville, Kentucky. One acre in a corner of this farm was set apart as God's acre, and on this land the Long Run Church was built. In its burial ground the body of the President's grandfather lies buried.

Lincoln's own father and mother were devout people, and their first cabin home was built at Elizabethtown, Kentucky, near the Severn's Valley Baptist Church which is the oldest Baptist organization west of the Alleghenys.

There has been a tendency to underrate the economic, social, and intellectual status of Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln, and their religious experiences have been called expressions of emotional fanaticism. It is not likely that either one of Lincoln's parents or his stepmother were students of theology, but they were united with religious movements which were attempting to interpret the will of God for pioneers who were settling a vast American wilderness.

After two years of married life spent in Elizabethtown, Lincoln's parents moved to a point about one mile south of the South Fork Baptist Church, and probably attended the services there. This was known as a Separate Baptist Church, and the first baptisms in Kentucky are said to have taken place in this congregation.

The Lincolns affiliated, however, with the Little Mount Separate Baptist Church which was situated about five miles north of the Lincoln cabin. The first sermons Lincoln heard were from the pulpit of this anti-slavery church. Not only were Lincoln's parents members of this congregation, but Caleb Hazel, one of Lincoln's school teachers, also joined this religious body.

One cannot place too much emphasis on the fact that Lincoln's parents were affiliated with an anti-slavery

church, as it was in the home of his parents, Thomas and Nancy Lincoln, that Abraham first heard the wrongs of slavery discussed. Both ministers who were the regular preachers of the congregation while Abraham was growing up were greatly opposed to slavery and preached against it.

We can understand why Lincoln could write, "I am naturally anti-slavery," for long before the slavery question became a political issue with him, it was a moral issue debated in the churches with which his parents were affiliated. It will be recalled that Abraham Lincoln said in one of his autobiographical sketches that his father left Kentucky for Indiana "partly on account of slavery."

There was no church organization in the Pigeon Creek community where the Lincolns settled in Indiana at the time of their arrival, and it was not until after the death of Lincoln's mother that steps were taken to establish a congregation in the community. Nancy Hanks Lincoln's name was still on the old church register at the Little Mount Church in Kentucky when she passed away. It was David Elkin, a pastor of this church, who journeyed to Indiana and preached the funeral sermon in her memory.

Thomas Lincoln was one of the moving spirits in the building of the Pigeon Church in Spencer County, Indiana, and he is said to have made the pulpit and other furniture in the primitive log meeting house. Abraham at this time was old enough to help in the construction, and it can be said that he helped to erect at least one log church building where he attended worship.

The old minute book of the congregation is still extant, and the names of Thomas Lincoln and his wife, Sarah, appear upon its pages. The record shows that Thomas Lincoln joined the church by letter from the Kentucky church while his wife joined "by experience." Abraham Lincoln's sister Sarah also affiliated with the congregation "by experience," but Abraham's name does not appear on the register.

Thomas Lincoln was not only a member of the Pigeon Church but a very active one as the record reveals. He often served as moderator at its meetings and was appointed on important committees to look after improvements to the building, to call on absent members, to interview those who had violated some of the church rules, and to attend conferences and conventions as a representative of the church.

The religion of Lincoln's parents found expression in the home. Abraham is said to have told a friend, "My mother was a ready reader and read the Bible to me habitually." We are also advised by members of the family that grace was always said at every meal. During all the impressionable years spent in Indiana, Lincoln was living in a home where a very definite religious atmosphere was created.

After Lincoln's father and his stepmother moved to Illinois they still kept up their active interest in the church, and Thomas affiliated with the Christian or Disciple Church at Charleston, Illinois. He died an active member of this congregation and the minister of the church has testified to his exemplary christian character and his loyalty to the church.

These ancestors of Abraham Lincoln who passed on to the offspring a deep appreciation for spiritual values contributed more or less to the first annual national Thanksgiving proclamation issued by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, which established a special day of Thanksgiving each year for the nation to acknowledge its religious heritage.

AN AUTHENTIC LINCOLN STORY
FRIENDS' WITNESS 3RD MONTH 1931.

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"When we arose, his countenance was so changed he looked as though he had the victory".

(Told by George N. Hartley, in the "American Friend".)

(Copied by J. Marshall Watkins, Sr., Pasadena 6 Calif.) 7/7/1950.

Unitarian Society of Fort Wayne

2929 FAIRFIELD AVENUE
FORT WAYNE 6, INDIANA

ARON S. GILMARTIN, MINISTER

February 20, 1950

Dr. Louis Warren,
Lincoln Museum,
Lincoln Life Insurance Company,
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Dr. Warren:

Recently we sent the enclosed piece of literature about Lincoln to all the people on our church mailing list. One copy seems to have fallen into the hands of a Quaker living at Portland, Indiana. He has written me as follows:

"Abraham Lincoln was a birthright Quaker, and always remained one. Quakers went to the White House to meet with him. He wrote of his Quakerism in his only short autobiography in 1859. Our General Conference has always counted him a Quaker."

I am interested in the accuracy of these statements, and the evidence for same if true.

Would it be too much trouble for you to check this information and to write me what you find?

If the above should prove to be true, how do you account for the statement attributed to Mary Todd Lincoln?

Sincerely yours,

Aron S. Gilmartin

Quakers

March 10, 1950

Mr. Aron S. Gilmartin
2929 Fairfield Avenue
Fort Wayne 6, Indiana

My dear Mr. Gilmartin:

Back at my desk after a long speaking
itinerary I find your letter of February 20.

You will please find enclosed a little
booklet showing the only reference, as far as I
know, that Lincoln made to affiliation of his
forebears with the Quakers.

Very truly yours,

LAW:EW
Enc.

Director

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 1401

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

February 13, 1956

LINCOLN—A COSMOPOLITAN CHRISTIAN

The beginning of the Lenten season invites a review of some of the religious bodies with which the Lincoln family came in contact. It is well known that Abraham Lincoln was not a member of any church group, yet he was a man of profound faith in God. It is the purpose of this monograph to arrange chronologically a compilation of testimonies in which various denominations have set forth their claims of having influenced Lincoln at some time in his life. A summary of these allegations might allow us to think of Lincoln as a cosmopolitan Christian.

QUAKER

Lincoln prepared a biographical sketch for John Locke Scripps in which he wrote: "The family (Lincolns) were originally Quakers, though in later times they have fallen away from the peculiar habits of that people." We have not discovered that any of Lincoln's direct ancestors were members of that body although some of the Pennsylvania Lincolns intermarried with the Quakers. When Herbert Hoover became President the Society of Friends claimed two chief executives, Lincoln and Hoover.

METHODIST

The parents of Lincoln were married by a Methodist clergyman, Jesse Head, and when Thomas Lincoln married his second wife another minister of that church, John L. Rogers, performed the ceremony. When Lincoln became President, the Foundry Methodist Church at Washington, where Lincoln was in attendance on a special occasion, by subscriptions collected at the time, made the President a Life Director of its Missionary Society. The Methodist Bishop Simpson spoke the last eulogy over the body of Lincoln at Springfield, Illinois.

BAPTIST

Lincoln's parents very early affiliated with the Little Mount Separate Baptist Church in Kentucky which was an anti-slavery organization. After the President's death his widow wrote: "My husband's heart was naturally religious, he had often described to me his noble mother—the prayers she offered up for him." During the Indiana days the father Thomas joined Pigeon Baptist Church by letter from Kentucky and his second wife joined by experience. Abraham's sister affiliated with the church about the time of her wedding and it was customary for young people to postpone church membership until establishing a home. Abraham did not marry until he was thirty-three years old.

CATHOLIC

Abraham Lincoln's first school teacher was Zachariah Riney, a member of the Catholic faith. Abe's Aunt Mary Mudd Lincoln and her son also named Abraham, the President's cousin, were also members of that church. A Eucharistic Congress was held in Chicago in 1927 and Cardinal Muehleisen according to the press, stated: "When Father St. Cyr came to say mass for Lincoln's stepmother, Mr. Lincoln (Abraham, the President) would prepare the altar himself. Indeed with his own hands Abraham carved out six wooden chairs to be used at the mass." Apparently stepmother was confused with aunt.

DISCIPLES

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Lincoln after settling in Illinois affiliated with the Disciples of Christ or Christian Church and they both died members of this church. A reminiscence of Rev. John O. Kane, a well known minister of the Christian Church stated: "I baptised him (Abraham Lincoln) in a creek near Springfield, Illinois. . . . I placed his name on the church book. He lived and died a member of the Church of Christ." (Name does not appear on register.) Dr. Edward Scribner Ames, minister of the University Church of Disciples in Chi-

cago stated in a sermon: "Lincoln could very well be a member of this church. Why not take him in." The following year Dr. Ames unveiled a Lincoln bust and concluded the ceremonies with the statement, "Mr. Lincoln we receive you into the membership and fellowship of this church."

EPISCOPALIAN

An Episcopalian clergyman of Springfield, Illinois, Rev. Charles Dresser officiated at the wedding of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd. Later Lincoln purchased the rectory from Dr. Dresser and lived in that home during the Springfield years. Approaching the choir in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York there has been prepared in the parapet a series of twenty recesses each representing a century in the Christian era. The niche prepared for the nineteenth century contains a statuette of Abraham Lincoln suggesting that he had contributed most to Christian civilization during that century.

PRESBYTERIAN

Mrs. Abraham Lincoln was a member of the Presbyterian Church at Springfield, Ill. and Mr. Lincoln, although not a formal member, served in different capacities for the church. During the Washington days both Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln attended the New York Ave. Presbyterian Church and rented a pew in the church which now bears a memorial tablet. Mrs. Sydney Lauck, for seventy years a member of the church said on the information of Dr. Gurley, the minister, that Abraham Lincoln "but for the assassin who took his life would have made public profession of his faith in Christ on Easter 1865."

CONGREGATIONALIST

Dr. W. E. Barton, a leading Congregationalist minister, gave an address at Illinois College at Jacksonville, Ill. On the assumption that Ann Rutledge before her death was planning to attend the Jacksonville Female College, and also assuming that Lincoln would have followed her and attended the Illinois College, Dr. Barton ventured this conclusion: "It requires no vivid stretch of the imagination to think of Abraham Lincoln as emerging from Illinois College as a Congregationalist minister." Dr. Barton further observed that Lincoln's early training "would have made him familiar with the Congregational form of church government."

SPIRITUALIST

The *St. Louis Globe Democrat* on March 31, 1896 in reporting the Progressive Spiritualists Convention at Springfield, Mo. stated that a delegate claimed: "Lincoln, as is well established by history, was a firm believer in Spiritualism as any member of the association." Another delegate commented: "It would hardly be fair to designate Lincoln as a spiritualist, though he is known to have accepted in a general way the truths of our religion." In 1891 Nellie C. Maynard published a 264 page book entitled "Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?"

UNITARIAN

The American Unitarian Association issued a leaflet under the caption "He Never Joined a Church" in which it is stated "I think that Lincoln could have been a Unitarian if he had been aware of the freedom of belief, the right of every man to think for himself on matters of religion."

UNIVERSALIST

Dr. Frank O. Hall of New York according to a report of a sermon stated: "We Universalists like to remember that Lincoln believed in the ideals our church stands for. He was a predestinarian, and his Calvinistic faith made him practically a Universalist."

Expert Convinced Lincoln Indeed Had A Quaker Link

Philadelphia, Feb. 8 (AP)—Abraham Lincoln claimed a Quaker background at least three times in his writings, but scholars always have been inclined to feel the Civil War President was mistaken.

But now, on the eve of Lincoln's birthday, Dr. Henry Cadbury, an authority on Quaker history, says he finally has become convinced that if Lincoln's paternal great-grandfather was not a Quaker, he at least married into a family that was Quaker on both sides.

"This circumstance would explain the traditions that were inherited by the great-grandson," Dr. Cadbury writes in *Friends Journal*.

"If they were vague or perhaps inexact about county or date, they rightly connected his father's forebears with the Society of Friends and with Pennsylvania," he says.

Dr. Cadbury, professor of religious history at Harvard University, bases his article on research by David S. Keiser, of Suburban Elkins Park, published last fall in the *Lincoln Herald*.

"He has patiently pursued some overlooked lines of descent and has established at least one line of ancestry that was demonstrably Quaker," Dr. Cadbury writes.

Keiser, a boys camp director, is not a Quaker, historian or genealogist, but devoted fifteen years to searching for Quaker ancestors of Lincoln. His findings are based on the Flower family ancestry of Lincoln.

Lincoln, of course, was the son of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks. Thomas was the son of another Abraham (1744-1786), who was the son of John Lincoln (1716-1788), the son of Mordecai Lincoln, Jr. (1686-1736).

"Without going further back we are faced by several blanks," observes Cadbury.

"The full names of the father of Nancy Hanks, or the mother of

Thomas Lincoln, and of the wife of John Lincoln have long been unknown. . . . The significant fact now is that the last point seems to be settled.

"The view, earlier hinted, has been unchallenged for nearly 40 years: That John Lincoln married July 5, 1743, Mrs. Rebecca Flower Morris, a widow and the daughter of Enoch Flower (or Flowers) and Rebecca Barnard (or Narbett)."

Painstaking Research

Keiser, in painstaking research, found the marriages of Enoch and Rebecca, and of both their parents, in the records of the Concord Meeting, Concordville, Pa. (now Chichester, Delaware county). Keiser concedes there is no proof Mrs. John Lincoln ever joined the meeting. But, as Cadbury puts it:

"In that period of Quaker history there were no membership lists, but with the prohibition against marrying out of the Meeting there is strong presumptions that persons married in Meeting were both of the Friends, and their children would be accounted Friends, as well."

Mrs. John Lincoln's parents were identified in the April and May, 1713, minutes "as both belonging to this Meeting."

Morning News, Wilmington, Del
● Fri., Feb. 1, 1963 11

Club to Hear About Quakers

The Lincoln Club will hear an authority on Quaker history at its annual dinner meeting Feb. 12.

Dr. Frederick B. Tolles, the Howard M. Jenkins professor of Quaker history and research at Swarthmore College, will be the speaker at the club's traditional Lincoln's Birthday program. His topic will be "Lincoln and the Quakers."

The dinner will be held at the Soda House on the estate of Mrs. R. R. M. Carpenter, Montchanin. H. Albert Young, Wilmington attorney who is club president, will preside.

Dr. Tolles, who has written a number of books on Quaker history, holds three degrees from Harvard and taught there for four years before joining the Swarthmore faculty in 1941.

Lincoln's Quaker Lineage Is Now ^{Universally} Believed Proved

By The Associated Press

Items A, B, & C, below, all written in this year of 1966 - plus previous acceptances without any challenges - establish as correct - Keiser's researched conclusion that Lincoln did have (Flower and Barnard) Quaker ancestors in Pennsylvania.

The following letters were addressed to David Keiser, 7733 Mill Rd., Phila Pa 19117

A. Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern, Genealogist for the National Jewish Archives, states his neutral conclusion: "Your arguments seem to me incontrovertible." 2-1-1966

B. Rev. Louis A. Warren, Lincoln Lore's genealogical expert, graciously concurs: "The early controversy about Lincoln's Quaker ancestry, as I recall it, was exclusively concerned about the lineage of those bearing the name Lincoln. I do not recall that the religion of the Flower family ever came up for discussion.

"Now that you have discovered the religious affiliation of the Flower family there does not appear to be any grounds for a difference of opinion about Quaker forebears.

"Thank you for copies of your findings on the Flower family." 10-24-1966

C. FRIENDS JOURNAL

Phila, Pa. 19102

Feb. 1, 1966

The Hunt for Lincoln's Quaker Ancestors

Letter from the Past—220

NOT for the first time, these letters on Quaker history are the by-product of my participation in quite modern activities. I was attending New England Yearly Meeting held in Providence, Rhode Island. There between sessions I stopped in at the Brown University Library and looked around. In the exhibit cases were a few letters by Abraham Lincoln from the library's very large collection. Two of them were addressed to a Mr. David Lincoln: the first, dated Washington, March 24, 1848, inquiring whether he might be of the same family; the second, nine days later, acknowledging the reply, and asking some further questions. Here near the end the word "Quaker," with its conspicuous capital Q, caught my eye, and I read this second letter more carefully. With the permission of the present owners I quote the letter at length. It will strike a sympathetic chord in any reader who has ever struggled with problems of his own genealogy. Unfortunately no replies from David Lincoln are known.

Washington, April 2nd. 1848

Dear Sir,

Last evening I was much gratified by receiving and reading your letter of the 30th. of March. There is no longer any doubt that your uncle Abraham and my grandfather was the same man. His family did reside in Washington county, Kentucky, just as you say you found them in 1801 or 2. The oldest son, uncle Mordecai, near twenty years ago removed from Kentucky to Hancock county Illinois where within a year or two afterwards he died, and where his surviving children now live. His two sons there now are Abraham 2 and Mordecai, and their Post-office is "La Harp." . . .

My father, Thomas, is still living, in Coles county Illinois being in the 71st. year of his age. His Post-office is Charleston, Coles co. Ill. I am his only child. I am now in

Samuel..Martha	Abraham..Sarah	John..Lydia
Lincoln	Jones	Whitman
-1690	-1718	m.1693
		m.1693

Richard....Lucy
Lambe
Bailie
m. 9-23-1639

Mordecai....Sarah	Richard..Sarah
Lincoln, Sr Jones	Salter Bowne
1657-1727	Am.1687 1669-

Mordecai Lincoln, Jr...	Hannah Salter
1686-1736 m. oro 1711	-1728?

John Lincoln.....	Mrs.Rebecca FLOWER Morris
1716-1790	m. 7-5-1743
	1720-1806 Widow of Jas.Morris

WILLIAM..ELIZ	RICHARD..FRANCES	Q
FLOWER MORIS	BARNARD LAMBE	U
MQ Pa.1692	MQ Eng.1678	A
ENOCH FLOWER...	REBECCA BARNARD	K
1692-1756 MQ Pa.1713		E
		R/
		S

Abbreviations

m. - married

QM - m. in Quaker MTG.

CAPs - Quakers

David S. Keiser

7733 Mill Road

Phila Pa 19117 2-1-1966

Granddad Abraham Lincoln..wives unknown..widow, Bathsheba
1744-1786 m.1770 &, if twice, 1778?

Thomas Lincoln.....Nancy Hanks - Parents unknown
1778-1851 m.1806 1784-1818

Pres. Abraham Lincoln....Mary Todd
1809-1865 m.1842 1818-1882

Seven-Generation LINCOLN Family Tree
(Non-controversial)

774 Millbrook Road
Haverford, Pa.
March 20, 1967

Lincoln Lore
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dear Editor, - - -

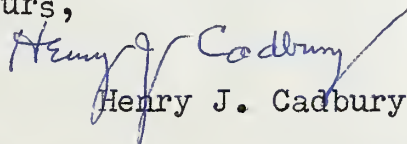
On Page 337 of his MYTHS AFTER LINCOLN, Lloyd Lewis states:

Lincoln "was quoted as saying that he had inherited certain traits from his Quaker grandmother".

Can you locate the quotation for me?

Thank You!

Truly yours,


Henry J. Cadbury

March 27, 1967

Dr. Henry J. Cadbury
774 Millbrook Road
Haverford, Pennsylvania 19041

Dear Dr. Cadbury:

In reply to your note of March 20, regarding the quotation from page 337 of MYTHS AFTER LINCOLN about Lincoln's "Quaker grandmother" I regret to say I have been unable to find any source for this bit of information.

We have searched in the "Collected Works" and our books and files on Lincoln quotations, and we find nothing that Lincoln ever said about his "Quaker grandmother."

If we should later come across this quotation, assuming that there is one, we will send it on to you.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) Ruth P. Higgins
Asst. to Dr. McMurtry

rh/

THE STAR and NEWS
Washington, D. C.
Saturday, February 10, 1973

God Will Know Old Abe Wasn't Joking

ABRAHAM LINCOLN USED to tell a story on himself concerning two Quaker wags from the Union states who were more than a little bit concerned that because of the president's levity Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy might get the upper hand in the Civil War.

"I think Jefferson will succeed."

"Why dost thou think so?"

"Because Jefferson is a praying man."

"And so is Abraham a praying man."

"Yes, but the Lord will think Abraham is joking."

The story probably is apocryphal but it illustrated a point about Lincoln that he knew well. Notwithstanding his many references to the Bible, to God and to faith, his endless telling of hilarious stories was altogether too much for some people. To them, he was a buffoon, and what he said about religion couldn't be taken seriously.

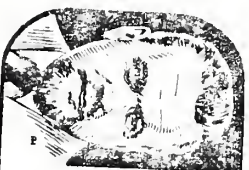
That might have been the case when he was alive. Yet, as time has passed, many historians who were not bent on debunking him became convinced of the depth of his religious experience. Some have gone so far as to call him a theologian. A profound one at that.

Reinhold Niebuhr, a leading theologian in the classic sense of the word, rated Lincoln as the most original of American religious thinkers. "Lincoln has always been my hero in religion and in statecraft," Niebuhr said.

Dean Willard L. Sperry of Harvard Divinity School, speaking of Lincoln as a theologian, said, "He is one of the few men in history, our own history and all history, whose religion was great enough to bridge the gulfs between the sects, and to encompass us all."

THE LATEST SCHOLAR to lay the theological accolades to Lincoln is Dr. Elton Trueblood, professor-at-large at Earlham College, a Quaker school in Richmond, Ind. Just off the presses is an intriguing and incisive book on Lincoln as a theologian, written by Trueblood. It's "Abraham Lincoln: Theologian of American Anguish," published by Harper & Row in New York.

Now then, let's get one thing straight. If Lincoln was a theologian, don't get the notion that he made things compli-



William
Willoughby

cated. That seems to be a particular specialty of theologians. The more complex-compound and abstruse their sentences become the more profound their readers think they are. In many cases, however, once one has trimmed the excess verbiage off their sentence structure, more has been written than propounded. Theology is a particularly demanding discipline, though, and a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding mental and spiritual exercise. Wordy or not.

Trueblood traces the formation of Lincoln's religious experience and the theology that emerged out of the expertise. There probably never has been a person who more clearly expounded the doctrine of the limited or derivative sovereignty of nations. This theology Lincoln got the hard way, by ruling over a nation that was falling apart over the question of slavery.

With men on both sides fighting for what they thought was the right position and each petitioning the same God for His favor in the conflict must have presented for many less profound persons than Lincoln an irreconcilable irony. Not Lincoln.

It is in his "Meditation on the Divine Will" that I see his theological acumen showing its best side. Lincoln wrote concerning the war:

"The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for, and against, the same thing at the same time.

"In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either

party—and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are the best adaptation to effect His purpose.

"I am almost ready to say this is probably true — that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By His mere quiet power, on the minds of the now contestants, He could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And having begun He could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds."

LINCOLN MADE FAMOUS the phrase referring to America as "God's almost chosen people." Trueblood's book has its greatest value in showing how the president came to the realization increasingly while in office that there really is a Guiding Hand in the affairs of nations as well as in the affairs of individuals — a theological concept which allows for the possibility of a genuine calling for both individuals and for nations. America was the almost chosen people.

Lincoln gained a sense of moral strength that what he was doing in resisting the South was right. Through this concept he felt he could see a pattern beneath what seemed to be an irrational spate of events. God lives. He is sovereign. He molds history—using erring mortals to do it.

It was with full understanding that Lincoln said following the Emancipation Proclamation, "It is a momentous thing to be the instrument, under Providence, of the liberation of a race."

I'M NOT TOO CERTAIN that Lincoln's competence as a theologian can be established all that solidly, but there's one thing I think I do know.

When God's all through with getting nations and people in and out of the messes they get into here on earth and He calls all the theologians together for one of those big brainstorming sessions in the sky, I've got a hunch He'll spend most of His time talking with old Abe.

At least He'll be able to understand what Abe has to say. Even if He doesn't quite agree with all of Abe's theology.

And He'll know Abe wasn't joking.

A TOUCHING EPISODE
IN THE PUBLIC LIFE
OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

I had been sauntering dreamily for weeks through the wild gorges and deep ravines of the valley of the Lehigh, or following the artist's trail among the shimmering lights of Delaware Water Gap, and was carrying away much treasure trove, as I believed. In this mood for delicious silence I sought a remote corner of the fast train for Philadelphia. At Pottsville several passengers entered, and very soon I saw a man aiming for the vacant seat beside me, saying "Good-morning" so heartily that I cordially responded.

Just then a remark dropped by our conductor in passing revealed to me the presence of the Rev. Alfred Cookman, the leading Methodist preacher in Philadelphia of that time, but long since passed to his reward. He soon opened without stint the stores of anecdote and adventure for which, in the memory of the passing generation, Dr. Cookman was distinguished. During that morning he shared with me choice morsels of experience and incident, finishing, as we neared our destination, with this episode in the public life of Mr. Lincoln:

The Emancipation Proclamation had been declared. The seething elements were at white heat. The entire country felt the tremulous vibration and the glow from the fire the great leader had stirred, while he stood weary and anxious and sometimes disheartened at his post.

Mr. Lincoln had been all night in grave counsel with his Cabinet. The morning found him exhausted. He was retiring to his private apartments when a subordinate appeared with a message from a lady who, he said, was waiting for audience and would not be denied.

Mrs. T—— had just arrived by train from

hospital service near the lines. A resident of Philadelphia, of high position and influence, with leisure, purse, and heart to serve her country, she offered all to relieve the suffering soldiers, ordering from her home the luxuries the Government could not undertake to supply, and distributing them discreetly with her own hands in hospital wards. Her plain Quaker garb was well known and her saintly face was tenderly revered by the hospital boys. To the noble heart beneath the scant, soft folds of drab, the hopes of the living and the farewells of the dying were a sacred trust to be faithfully rendered. On this morning she appeared at the White House at that early hour well primed with this responsibility. Official hindrance was no hindrance to her. She came to see the President, and, quietly though she said it, the President she would see. On this one of the many excursions she made to and from her home, she was commissioned by the boys to stay over a train in Washington on her return to Philadelphia, to bear their message to Mr. Lincoln—"and," said Dr. Cookman in telling me, "nothing earthly would have swerved the brave little woman from her purpose."

Mr. Lincoln could not deny a visitor whose claim to his attention seemed so urgent, and she was announced. Standing before him—for she would not waste his time nor her own in needless ceremony—she briefly delivered her commissions, earnestly pledged to him the hearty co-operation of the ranks in his latest bold measure, and, with inimitable pathos, gave him, in their own words, the assurances of the dying that with the last breath they would pray for victory—and for him.

Mr. Lincoln thanked her for these expressions of sympathy and support from the brave boys, thanked her for the loyal work she so sacredly sustained—when, with folded hands and fervent voice, she continued: "Abraham Lincoln, I have somewhat more to say to thee—I cannot go till I have prayed with thee." In her own words to Dr. Cookman, which I made note of at the time of our interview, "I kneeled and Abraham Lincoln kneeled, and the Spirit did give me utterance, and I did pour out my soul for Abraham Lincoln; and when we arose, with tears rolling down his cheeks he took both my hands in his and said, 'God bless you forever for the strength, the courage, and the faith you have given me this hour,' and I came away."

No brush nor pencil could fill out the details of this picture as it grew upon me, while Dr. Cookman, deeply moved, described it.

QUAKE

DRAWER 4A

Religious

CONTACTS

